

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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APPROVED BY NEA:SSOBER

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NEA/IRN:CMASS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 033638

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA

SUBJECT: ALLEGED IRANIAN THREAT AGAINST UAE

REFS: (A) JIDDA 1187, (B) TEHRAN 1430, (C) ABU DHABI 457

1. BEGIN FYI: WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE OF A
SPECIFIC IRANIAN THREAT TO UAE. WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE
WITH CONJECTURE ABU DHABI REFTEL THAT, AS A RESULT OF
RECENT UAE-SAUDI DISCUSSIONS GENERAL UAE NERVOUSNESS ABOUT
IRANIAN WAR OF NERVES TO INFLUENCE OPEC PRICE DECISION HAS
BECOME TRANSLATED IN SAUDI THINKING INTO A MORE SPECIFIC
THREAT TO UAE. IN OUR OWN ASSESSMENT WE FIND IT DIFFICULT
TO PERCEIVE OF ANY DIRECT ACTION IRAN COULD TAKE AT THIS
TIME AGAINST UAE WHICH WOULD NOT BE SELF-DEFEATING TO OVER-
ALL IRANIAN POLICY OBJECTIVES INCLUDING OPEC SOLIDARITY.

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WE ASSUME THAT BOTH SAUDI ARABIA AND UAE LEADERS ADEQUATELY
UNDERSTAND THAT BECAUSE OF THE TYPES OF CRUDE OIL INVOLVED
AND RELATIVE SURPLUS PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES, IT IS SAUDI,
NOT UAE PRODUCTION DECISIONS WHICH WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT
IMPACT ON DEMAND FOR IRANIAN CRUDE. WHILE WE ARE PROPERLY
CONCERNED WITH THE GRAVITY SAUDI LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY
ATTACHES TO IRANIAN EFFORTS TO MAKE UAE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH

ITS PRESENT PRO-SAUDI ORIENTATION IN OPEC, WE BELIEVE THAT
USG SHOULD NOT BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED
IN

THIS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF INTRA-OPEC INFIGHTING AS THE
GULF PRODUCERS SEEK TO RECONCILE THEIR OIL POLICY WITH
THEIR BROADER NEED FOR POLITICAL COOPERATION. WE WISH TO
AVOID RAISING THIS ISSUE DIRECTLY WITH EITHER IRAN OR
UAE. END FYI.

2. IF PRINCE SAUD ASKS AGAIN FOR US ASSESSMENT OF
ALLEGED IRANIAN THREAT AGAINST UAE, YOU SHOULD RESPOND AS
FOLLOWS: IN RESPONSE TO SAUDI REQUEST WE HAVE MADE
THOROUGH REVIEW OF INFORMATION INDEPENDENTLY AVAILABLE TO
US AND ARE AWARE OF NO SPECIFIC IRANIAN THREAT TO UAE.
WE ARE, OF COURSE, AWARE OF SHAH'S JANUARY 29 FRENCH TELE-
VISION INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE STATED THAT "OVERPRODUCTION"
BY SAUDI ARABIA OR UAE "IS AN ACT OF AGGRESSION" AGAINST
IRAN. OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE CERTAIN PRESENT POLITICAL
TENSIONS AMONG GULF OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES AS THE RESULT
OF THE RECENT OPEC DECISIONS BUT WE FIND IT HARD TO CON-
CEIVE THAT IT WOULD BE IN IRAN'S INTEREST TO MAKE ANY KIND
OF SPECIFIC THREAT AGAINST THE UAE OR ANY OTHER GULF
COUNTRY. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW IF SAG HAD
A DIFFERENT ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION.
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